

### **Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

#### **Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-11 (canceled).

Claim 12 (new) A method for fabricating a semiconductor device, comprising:

forming a contact hole in an organic insulating layer using a patterned resist layer formed over the organic insulating layer as a mask; and

ashing the patterned resist layer by a plasma treatment in the presence of a mixed gas containing nitrogen and hydrogen, and forming a protective film on a surface of the contact hole during said ashing, wherein the protective film is formed by reacting the organic insulating layer with the nitrogen.

Claim 13 (new) A method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the mixed gas is  $O_2+N_2H_2$ .

Claim 14 (new) A method for fabricating a semiconductor device,  
comprising:

forming an organic spin-on-glass (SOG) film over an interconnect layer;

forming a contact hole in the organic SOG insulating layer so as to  
expose the interconnect layer using a patterned resist layer formed over the  
organic SOG insulating layer as a mask; and

ashing the patterned resist layer by a plasma treatment in the presence of  
a mixed gas containing nitrogen and hydrogen, and forming a protective film  
on a surface of the contact hole during said ashing, wherein the protective film  
is formed by reacting the organic SOG insulating layer with the nitrogen.

Claim 15 (new) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein a material  
of the organic SOG layer is obtained by adding an alkyl group to a silicon  
oxide.

Claim 16 (new) A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the mixed  
gas is  $O_2+N_2H_2$ .

Claim 17 (new) A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the mixed  
gas is  $O_2+N_2H_2$ .